



"There is no **right** way to do a wrong thing."

- from *Bits & Pieces* magazine

Purchasing Update

Division of Purchasing, Idaho Department of Administration
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Small Purchasing Guide

A new publication, *Small Purchasing Guide*, is now available on the purchasing web site. This new guide is designed to give state agency purchasing personnel an overall understanding of state statutes and purchasing rules, policies and procedures pertaining to small purchases. While this publication is mostly a condensed version of the larger *Purchasing Reference Guide*, it includes new information on multiple-year contracting authority and procedures for the purchase of vehicles not available on statewide contracts.

Vendor Search System

Since the vendor registration system was discontinued in 2000, the only database of suppliers wishing to do business with the State we have available is located within the Sicomnet BASEC system. Access to that database is now being made available to all state agencies. The BASEC Vendor Review System provides for searches on vendors by name, location, commodity code, and even e-mail address. Many searches can be combined to narrow the listings. Instructions for accessing this system are available at the purchasing website. You may contact anyone, buyers or staff, at the Division of Purchasing for the User ID and Password.

Vehicle Purchases

Agencies requiring the purchase of vehicles not available on statewide contracts and costing less than their delegated authority may purchase vehicles using Request for Quotations methods. Details for the purchase of vehicles are outlined in the *Small Purchasing Guide* publication and are also available as *Chapter 26 Vehicle Purchases* in the *Purchasing Reference Guide*. Both publications may be downloaded at the purchasing website as well as an updated *Table of Contents* for the *Purchasing Reference Guide*. All purchases exceeding the agency's delegated authority must be sent to the Division of Purchasing for processing. Agencies are cautioned against splitting requirements to avoid the formal bidding process in accordance with Idaho Code 59-1026. All leases for vehicles are processed by the Division of Purchasing.

Contract Updates

Contract SBPO 1118– Laboratory Equipment & Supplies – Fisher Scientific. This contract has been bid as a Western State Contracting Alliance (WSCA) contract and will expire on March 2, 2005. Contact Aaron Wolter at 208-327-7452 for contract information.

Contract SBPO 4 – Continuous Form Computer Paper – Willamette Industries. As reported in the April Issue of *Purchasing Update*, this contract expired on March 3, 2003 and was not renewed or rebid due to the declining use of continuous form paper. This product may be purchased from Boise Office Solutions on the office supplies contract.

Contract SBPO 15 – Propane – Northern Energy and V-1 Propane. This contract expired on April 30, 2003 and is currently out to bid.

Purchasing Card – Wells Fargo Bank. This contract has been extended to October 31, 2003. Contract Gerry Silvester at 208-327-7325 for information.

Contract SBPO 1057 – Shredding & Record Disposal, On-Site – Shred-It. This contract has been extended to August 30, 2003. It will not be rebid at this time. Agencies may utilize any recycling, shredding, or disposal service that meets their needs.

Ethics In Government

The following article appeared in the May 2003 Issue of *Governing* magazine and is reprinted here with permission of the publisher and author.

Busted by the Feds

By Jonathan Walters, Potomac Chronicle

The Justice Department spends a lot of money tracking down state and local corruption. Is that necessary? Unfortunately, yes.

For those keeping score, 2001 was another typically busy year in the Public Integrity Section of the U.S. Department of Justice. As usual, state and local officials were prominent among those who kept the prosecutors busy. Some 95 state officials were indicted, and 61 were convicted. Another 75 were awaiting trial at the end of the year. On the local government side, it was even worse: 224 indicted, 184 convicted and 110 waiting trial. (Numbers for 2002 aren't in yet, but looking at 10 years of data, the statistics don't vary much from year to year; it's a steady drumbeat.)

For the vast majority of state and local readers who are (happily) unfamiliar with the Public Integrity Section, it was established in 1976 to keep public officials at all levels honest — and get rid of the ones who aren't.

The lawyers in this agency have always found quite a bit of work to do. Sometimes they have created the work themselves, launching sting operations in which they purposely tempted state and local officeholders to break the law. More recently, though, the Public Integrity people seem to have focused more on busting actual wrong-doers, rather than on the questionable task of testing the weak.

How much the feds spend on all this is hard to determine. The Justice Department doesn't calculate the cost of nailing crooked cops and tax assessors and state legislators. A host of federal agencies are frequently involved in such cases, from the IRS to the U.S. attorneys to the FBI, and they frequently enlist the help of state and local law officials. But there's no question that it's a substantial amount of money, in an era of evaporating federal support for everything from homeland security to education. Is it

possible the money would be better spent focusing attention on state and local government in a more positive fashion?

It's easy to think that until one digs a little for the stories behind the numbers. They range from sad to lascivious to simply appalling. There is the Alabama county sheriff who, after losing a close election in 2000, was charged with using his position to run background checks on those who had filed absentee ballots. There were the city bureaucrats in Providence, Rhode Island, who extorted cash from citizens in return for lowering tax assessments and steering contracts in a particular direction.

Contract steering turns up often on the recent lists of state and local officials accused of violating the public trust. In New Orleans, two were busted for accepting "a variety of benefits" to "influence official action concerning the administration and renewal" of sewer and water contracts. A former Houston city councilman (he's now serving 108 months in jail) joined with the city's ports commissioner to extract about \$50,000 from a group that was seeking "an ownership interest" in a convention center. The ports commissioner is doing 51 months.

Run-of-the-mill stuff for the feds to spend money on, arguably, at a time when they don't show much interest in paying for the education and homeland security programs they are forcing state and local governments to implement. The dollars involved in Houston are positively dinky compared to what the gang at Enron was up to. Even the numbers attached to such a sweeping effort as Operation Plunder Dome in Providence are kind of pitiful: One former tax collector in Providence was accused of accepting a total of \$6,000 in bribes in exchange for forgiving interest on late property tax payments. A deputy tax collector took \$7,500.

But it's equally plausible to argue — in an era of homeland security preoccupation — that confidence in state and local government has never been more important as an underpinning to stable, civil society. The report of the Public Integrity Section makes abundantly clear that a small handful of bad actors are continuing to give honest state and local officials a very bad name.

If you don't think so, consider the crowd of police and former police in Prichard, Alabama, indicted for racketeering, conspiracy and extortion. They were soliciting bribes from people they'd busted for drug offenses. If that's small-time stuff, the case of Joseph Loeper surely isn't: Loeper, the majority leader of the Pennsylvania Senate, was accused of accepting hundreds of thousands of dollars in return for his influence in trying to derail specific legislation. In the end, he pleaded guilty to obstructing an IRS tax investigation, resigned his post and went to prison.

The saddest part is that the feds don't seem to be running out of business. In the past few months, the IRS and local police have teamed up in Hercules, California, to see if federal grants for affordable housing had been misappropriated. Last month, they pressed charges against a building inspector in Quincy, Massachusetts, who was accused of illegally augmenting his \$54,000-a-year salary. In February, the Public Integrity section busted two Chicago cops who were complicit in an effort to frame an innocent man for drug possession.

It may not always be the stuff of shock and awe, but it erodes public confidence. And public confidence is something that it's very hard to put a price tag on.

New on the Internet

<http://www2.state.id.us/adm/purchasing>

- **Small Purchasing Guide** – new publication
- **Instructions for accessing the Sicomnet BASEC Vendor Review System** - new
- **Guidelines for Developing a Request for Proposal** – Revised to include information on negotiations
- **Chapter 26 Vehicle Purchases** – new addition to the Purchasing Reference Guide
- **New Table of Contents** for the Purchasing Reference Guide
- **Chapter 11 Contracts, Price Agreements, Leases** – revised for the Purchasing Reference Guide to include information on multiple-year contracting authority

Purchasing Update is a newsletter for the **Department of Administration, Division of Purchasing** designed to provide purchasing information to state and public agency purchasing personnel. Anyone wishing to contribute information and ideas for future articles; has questions regarding state purchasing issues; the **Division of Purchasing** mission or activities, please contact:

Frank Pierce, CPPB
Purchasing Training Officer
Division of Purchasing
PO Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0075
Voice (208) 327-7322
FAX (208) 327-7320
E-mail: fpierce@adm.state.id.us

Purchasing Staff

Jan Cox, Administrator, (208) 327-7465, jcox@adm.state.id.us
Bobbi Eckerle, Operations Manager, (208) 327-7465, beckerle@adm.state.id.us

Lyle Gessford, State Purchasing Manager, (208) 327-7115, lgessfor@adm.state.id.us

Gerry Silvester, Sr. Purchasing Officer, (208) 327-7325, gsilvest@adm.state.id.us

Mark Little, IT Purchasing Officer, (208) 327-7359, mlittle@adm.state.id.us

Frank Pierce, Purchasing Training Officer, (208) 327-7322, fpierce@adm.state.id.us

Pearl Smith, Buyer, (208) 327-7116, psmith@adm.state.id.us

Elaine Ricketts, Buyer, (208) 327-7453, erickett@adm.state.id.us

Dick Vogel, Buyer, (208) 327-7323, dvogel@adm.state.id.us

Aaron Wolter, Buyer, (208) 327-7452, awolter@adm.state.id.us

Clarke Camenga, Program Information Coordinator (208) 327-7465,
ccamenga@adm.state.id.us

Carolyn Valentine, Office Specialist, (208) 327-7465, cvalenti@adm.state.id.us

Rogene Evans, Office Specialist, (208) 327-7465, rfevans@adm.state.id.us

Scot Maring, Office Specialist, (208) 327-7465, smaring@adm.state.id.us